

Clinical Trial Protocol

Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

23 Oct 2026

The effectiveness of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy on anxiety in undergraduate psychology students

Protocol summary

Study aim

Determining the effectiveness of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy on anxiety in undergraduate psychology students

Design

A randomized controlled and parallel group clinical trial on 30 female students with anxiety was conducted using a simple randomization method to randomize participants.

Settings and conduct

This study is being conducted at the Hamdeli Psychology Clinic in Semnan and includes female students with anxiety. Participants will be randomly divided into two groups: an experimental group that receives eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy, and a control group that only follows the center's routine programs.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria: Female student, 18-25 years old, pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology, and having moderate to severe anxiety. Exclusion criteria: Severe psychiatric disorders, unstable psychiatric medication use, history of seizures or brain injury, concurrent medication, substance abuse, pregnancy, and inability to attend regularly.

Intervention groups

In this study, the experimental group will participate in eight 90-minute sessions of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy over a period of one month. The content of the sessions includes identification of anxiety-provoking memories, bilateral eye movement stimulation, cognitive reprocessing, reinforcement of positive beliefs, and stabilization of relaxation. The control group will receive only the usual center programs and will not receive any related intervention.

Main outcome variables

Anxiety

General information

Reason for update

Acronym

IRCT registration information

IRCT registration number: **IRCT20250311065038N1**

Registration date: **2025-04-20, 1404/01/31**

Registration timing: **prospective**

Last update: **2025-04-20, 1404/01/31**

Update count: **0**

Registration date

2025-04-20, 1404/01/31

Registrant information

Name

Arefeh Amirian

Name of organization / entity

Islamic Azad University, Semnan Branch

Country

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

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Email address

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Recruitment status

Recruitment complete

Funding source

Expected recruitment start date

2025-05-10, 1404/02/20

Expected recruitment end date

2025-06-10, 1404/03/20

Actual recruitment start date

empty

Actual recruitment end date

empty

Trial completion date

empty

Scientific title

The effectiveness of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy on anxiety in undergraduate psychology students

Public title

The effect of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy on anxiety

Purpose

Treatment

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria**Inclusion criteria:**

Female undergraduate student in psychology (semesters 2 to 8). Age between 18 and 25 years at the time of study entry. Having a moderate to severe level of anxiety based on the Spielberger Anxiety Inventory score. Willingness and informed consent to participate in the research. Not receiving EMDR therapy in the past six months. Commitment to regular attendance at all treatment sessions and to complete pre- and post-tests.

Exclusion criteria:

Having a severe psychiatric disorder (such as psychosis, active bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or borderline personality disorder) as clinically assessed. Unstable psychiatric medication use (start or change of medication within the last 6 weeks). History of severe brain injury or active seizures. Concurrent participation in other psychological or pharmacological treatments for anxiety at the time of the research. Drug or alcohol abuse within the last three months. Pregnancy or breastfeeding at the time of research. Unwillingness or inability to attend therapy sessions regularly and complete assessment procedures.

Age

From **18 years** old to **25 years** old

Gender

Female

Phase

N/A

Groups that have been masked

No information

Sample size

Target sample size: **30**

Randomization (investigator's opinion)

Randomized

Randomization description

In this study, randomization is performed using a simple randomization method with an individual randomization unit. In order to divide participants into two intervention and control groups, 30 cards are prepared, 15 of which have the letter "M" (symbol of the intervention group) written on them and the other 15 have the letter "K" (symbol of the control group) written on them. Then, each participant randomly selects a card from the box containing these cards. Based on the letter written on the card, the individual is assigned to one of the two groups. This method ensures that all participants have an equal chance of being in each group and that the assignment process is carried out fairly and without bias.

Blinding (investigator's opinion)

Not blinded

Blinding description**Placebo**

Not used

Assignment

Parallel

Other design features**Secondary Ids**

empty

Ethics committees**1****Ethics committee****Name of ethics committee**

Ethics Committee of Semnan Azad University

Street address

Islamic Azad University, University Town, Semnan

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Province

Semnan

Postal code

3513137111

Approval date

2025-01-27, 1403/11/08

Ethics committee reference number

IR.IAU.SEMNAN.REC.1403.110

Health conditions studied**1****Description of health condition studied**

Anxiety

ICD-10 code

F41

ICD-10 code description

Other anxiety disorders

Primary outcomes**1****Description**

Anxiety

Timepoint

Before the start of the intervention and after completing 8 intervention sessions.

Method of measurement

Spielberger Anxiety Inventory (1970)

Secondary outcomes**1****Description**

Quality of Life

Timepoint

Before the start of the intervention and after completing

8 intervention sessions.

Method of measurement

World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire (1996)

2

Description

Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Timepoint

Before the start of the intervention and after completing 8 intervention sessions.

Method of measurement

General Self-Efficacy Scale by Scherer et al. (1982)

Intervention groups

1

Description

Intervention group: The experimental group will undergo an eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy intervention. This intervention will be delivered over 8 weekly 90-minute sessions and is designed to reduce anxiety and reframe cognitive and emotional processing related to negative or stressful experiences in psychology students. Initially, participants will be introduced to the general framework of EMDR therapy, the Adaptive Information Processing (AIP) model, and the importance of identifying anxiety-provoking memories. Then, using cognitive assessment techniques, the therapist will identify the participant's distressing mental image, associated negative beliefs, emotions, and physical responses. In the main stages of the treatment, participants will undergo bilateral stimulation (usually with rapid eye movements) to process and reorganize distressing memories in memory. This stimulation will accelerate cognitive processing and reduce the emotional burden of the memories. In each session, the individual's negative beliefs about themselves (such as "I am powerless" or "I am in danger") are identified and replaced with positive beliefs. At the end of the treatment process, participants are provided with exercises to consolidate positive beliefs, relax, and strengthen their ability to face anxiety-provoking situations. The ultimate goal of this intervention is to sustainably reduce anxiety, increase psychological resilience, and improve students' academic and social performance in real-life situations.

Category

Treatment - Other

2

Description

Control group: This group does not receive any therapeutic intervention and serves only as a benchmark for comparison with the experimental group. During the study period, individuals in this group continue their normal life and usual care routines and do not receive any treatment or program related to Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy. The

aim of this approach is to maintain constant conditions in the control group in order to accurately compare the changes made in the intervention group. This comparison allows for the real impact of EMDR therapy on reducing anxiety in psychology students.

Category

Treatment - Other

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center

Name of recruitment center

Hamdeli Psychology Clinic

Full name of responsible person

Ali Mohebi

Street address

corner of Azadi 10, Azadi Street, Amirkabir Boulevard.

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Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor

Name of organization / entity

Islamic Azad University, Semnan branch

Full name of responsible person

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Grant name

Grant code / Reference number

Is the source of funding the same sponsor organization/entity?

Yes

Title of funding source

Islamic Azad University, Semnan branch

Proportion provided by this source

100

Public or private sector

Public

Domestic or foreign origin

Domestic

Category of foreign source of funding

empty

Country of origin**Type of organization providing the funding**

Academic

Person responsible for general inquiries**Contact****Name of organization / entity**

Islamic Azad University, Semnan Branch

Full name of responsible person

Atefeh Bidukhti

Position

Associate professor

Latest degree

Ph.D.

Other areas of specialty/work

Psychology

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Person responsible for scientific inquiries**Contact****Name of organization / entity**

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Ph.D.

Other areas of specialty/work

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Person responsible for updating data**Contact****Name of organization / entity**

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Full name of responsible person

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Position

Student

Latest degree

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Other areas of specialty/work

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Sharing plan**Deidentified Individual Participant Data Set (IPD)**

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Study Protocol

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Statistical Analysis Plan

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Informed Consent Form

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Clinical Study Report

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Analytic Code

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Data Dictionary

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Title and more details about the data/document

In this study, data and documentation will be shared in accordance with ethical principles and confidentiality considerations. Individual data of participants will only be published after removing identifying information and in the form of anonymous data. The original data, including the results related to the research variables, will be made available to qualified researchers in the form of a structured dataset without personal information. In addition to quantitative data, methodological documentation of the research, including the study protocol, data collection methods, intervention implementation instructions, and tools used, will also be shared.

When the data will become available and for how long

Data and documentation from this study will be available for one month after the publication of the final results. This time frame is intended to ensure thorough data analysis and ethical sharing of information.

To whom data/document is available

The data and documentation of this research will be available only to researchers and experts in the relevant scientific field who work in academic institutions, research centers, and reputable scientific organizations. Access requests from independent researchers will also be considered if they submit a relevant research plan and receive approval from the research ethics committee. Access to data for people working in industry will only be possible if they cooperate with academic or research centers and comply with research ethics.

Under which criteria data/document could be used

The data and documentation of this study may only be used for scientific and research purposes related to the subject of the study, and any commercial or promotional use is prohibited. Statistical analyses and meta-analyses are permitted in compliance with scientific and ethical

principles. The use of data must be in such a way that the identity of the participants cannot be identified. Applicant researchers must submit a formal application, sign an ethical commitment letter, and receive approval from the research ethics committee. Reference to the original source is mandatory, and sharing of data with third parties without official permission is prohibited.

From where data/document is obtainable

If you need data, please contact
arefeham21@gmail.com.

What processes are involved for a request to access data/document

After receiving the request and reviewing it by the principal investigator, the data will be sent to the applicant within a maximum of one week, along with a commitment not to publish the data without the name of the principal investigator.

Comments